

TOOTING AND MITCHAM 3, WYCOMBE WANDERERS 2 (Isthmian League)

ON paper Tooting fielded their best team so far against Wycombe on Saturday. Mercurial Mike Clay was brought in to lead the attack, Paddy Hasty moved into Hyde's position and Johnny Harlow restored to right-back.

With this in mind the only thing I can say about Saturday's match is—what happened? Wycombe ran rings round them for most of the match. A goal by Clay just before the break and a do-or-die spell afterwards earned them the points but the desperate moments of the second half should never have arisen.

Wycombe were fast and tricky but no better than Tooting. What they had that seemed to be missing from the home side was—a sense of urgency. Wherever the ball went a Wycombe man was sure to be near

it waiting for a wild pass or missed pickup.

Tooting's pay-off passes were anything but accurate and with the blues quick to exploit the misses Tooting were forced into a desperate rear-guard action; only adroit action by Pearson kept their goal intact in the first half.

As it was the game developed into a fast and furious affray with Tooting coming off the worst tactically. If Hasty had got moving earlier, the visitors might have been controlled.

It may have been the Italian-type sunshine but he was far from a bundle of action.

By Bill Wells

On the other hand Clay and the other forwards fought hard—all the time. They all had shots but left-half Ted Murphy came nearest when, instead of passing, he went through on his own and then cut back the ball from an acute angle. It had Wycombe worried.

Things looked black for Tooting as the interval approached. Then Clay got the reward for his efforts; Brown in the Wanderers' goal never saw the ball.

It put new life into Tooting. For the first 20 minutes after the change-over they kept the Wycombe defence at full stretch. Even Hasty took the lead out of his boots, but it was Flanagan who scored the second goal with a split-second, low diving header.

Hasty made the third minutes later with a pass to Flanagan, who headed across for Roberts to pop it into the net.

Then Tooting eased up and it was nearly their undoing. The Wanderers' centre-forward, Paul Bates, was waiting for just such an opportunity. He gave Pearson no chance at all when it arrived.

It was Pearson's testing time. Several times the Wycombe forwards had the goal at their mercy while Pearson was scrambling back after saves. Mostly their shots went wide but Pearson did well to turn a hard drive by Worley.

Wycombe got their second after a Flanagan free-kick was cleared. The whole of the Tooting defence were standing still when Bates went through to score again.

The odds were fairly even in the last minutes but if there had been another 10 minutes Wycombe would have had my money.

Tooting: Pearson; Harlow, Edwards; Slade, Bennett, Murphy; Roberts, Viney, Clay, Hasty, Flanagan.